

日本語ニュース

NIHONGO NEWS - JAPANESE NEWS

Japanese Language and
Culture

Clovis Grove Elementary
January 2013

こんにちは！ Konnichiwa! Hello!

After finishing our unit on "Colors and Numbers in our World", we have just begun our next unit on "My Body/My Health". Also, in this holiday season, we learned a new song about Santa Clause and learned a little about holiday in Japan at this time of year, when the Japanese celebrated their biggest holiday of the year at New Year's on January 1st.

Every day I am amazed at how fast and how well our Kindergartners are learning Japanese, even after teaching it for many years. In the book entitled "A Taste for Language", Mary Jo Ervin clearly explains the benefits and importance of starting to learn a foreign language at a young age. From her extensive research on the benefits of early language learning, Ms. Ervin states:

- The longer the period of exposure and interaction in a foreign language the greater the likelihood that a child will become fluent in the language.
- Children are fascinated by the new sounds they are hearing and will try very hard to derive meaning from them.
- Young children by nature are excellent mimics. They delight in role play and can adopt the behavior and speech mannerisms from the foreign language easier than older children and adults that have never studied Foreign Languages
- Children, who begin second language learning early and continue it, develop good listening habits and sound discrimination skills. As a result, they can obtain a higher level of these skills in English as well.
- Learning a foreign language at a young age offers information to a child that is being absorbed at a phenomenal rate. Children between the ages of 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 6 are like sponges and they enjoy connecting the new language with other areas of the school curriculum
- Children develop an early cultural awareness of a language and the people who speak it. They are intrigued by the different customs and a longer sequence of language and culture study is beneficial to children personally and professionally. Second language acquisition provides a broad, creative basis upon which to live, work and appreciate others in this world.

Need to get ahold of me? Please feel free to contact me anytime at the following phone number or e-mail address:

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あけましておめでとう
ございます！

Akemashite Omedetoo Gozaimasu

Happy New Year
Everyone!

In December/January....

Our current unit of study is "My Body/My Health". We are learning the different words for different parts of the body and singing the song "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes" in Japanese as well! We'll also learn some songs that use our right and left hands as well as many actions that use our body parts. We'll even do an exercise video from Japan. We continue to read some books from Japan and we are beginning to work with writing in Japanese, by copying the Japanese alphabet symbols. We are also doing some math with graphs, patterns and shapes. Be sure to ask your kids about it!



atama kata hiza ashi

My Body/My HealthBody Parts

| | | |
|-------|--------------|----------|
| Atama | (ah-tah-mah) | head |
| Kata | (kah-tah) | shoulder |
| Hiza | (he-zah) | knees |
| Ashi | (ah-she) | feet |
| Me | (may) | eyes |
| Mimi | (me-me) | ears |
| Kuchi | (koo-che) | mouth |
| Hana | (ha-nah) | nose |
| Te | (tay) | hand |
| Ude | (oo-day) | arm |
| Onaka | (oh-nah-kah) | stomach |

(onaka) ga itai! (oh-nah-kah-gah-ee-tah-ee)
My _____ hurts!

Shapes

| | | |
|---------|---------------|----------|
| Maru | (mah-roo) | circle |
| Shikaku | (she-kah-koo) | square |
| sankaku | (san-kah-koo) | triangle |
| hoshi | (hoe-she) | star |

Seasonal Words

| | | |
|------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Yuki | (you-key) | snow |
| Yukidaruma | (you-key-dah-roo-mah) | snowman |
| Oshoogatsu | (oh-show-gah-tsue) | New Year's |

Christmas
Cake
In Japan

Classroom Commands

(here again are a few that we use frequently in class)

| | | |
|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| ___o sawatte | (oh-sah-wah-tay) | touch your (nose) |
| ___o yusutte | (oh-you-sue-tay) | shake your (arm) |
| Tataite | (tah-tah-ee-tay) | clap |
| Ashibumi shite | (ah-she-boo-me-she-tay) | stamp your feet |
| Tatte | (tah-tay) | stand up |
| Suwatte | (sue-wah-tay) | sit down |
| Mitte | (me-tay) | look |
| Kite | (key-tay) | listen |
| Te o agette | (tay-oh-ah-geh-tay) | raise your hand |
| Mawatte | (mah-wah-tay) | turn around |
| Dance o shite | (dance-o-she-tay) | dance |
| Utatte | (oo-tah-tay) | sing |
| Tabete | (tah-beh-tay) | eat |
| Nonde | (nohn-day) | drink |
| Nete | (neh-tay) | sleep |
| Okite | (oh-key-tay) | wake up |
| Kazoete | (kah-zo-ee-tay) | count |

Culturally Speaking for the holiday season.....

Most Japanese people do not celebrate the Christmas Holiday season as a secular (religious) holiday although some modern traditions have begun in Japan. Even though children will go to school and adults to work on this day (just a normal day), parents may put up a small Xmas tree at home and they may buy a traditional Christmas cake at the local bakery; a white angel food type of cake with a cool whip type frosting and fresh strawberries on top. This time of year is busy in Japan though, as they continue to celebrate the Japanese New Year from January 1st!